



# PA CONSORTIUM

PROTECTING PARENTS AND CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

To: The Special Rapporteur, Ms. Reem Alsalem

From: The PA CONSORTIUM

RE: A/HRC/53/36 Violence against women and girls at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council Geneva Conference June 19, 2023

Date: June 9, 2023

The “Report by the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Reem Alsalem, (A/HRC/53/36/) does not represent ALL STATES analysis on Violence against Women and Girls” and should be withdrawn immediately from publication, distribution and the Report places policy and lawmakers at risk of basing social and public health policies, legal remedies, and clinical remediations on unscientific, unfounded, and false information.

The Human Rights Council should consider best practices when investigating all perspectives of topics that seem controversial, rather than invest in biased interpretations of complex problems.

The Report goes against the basic principles and ethics that the United Nations was founded on trust, integrity and honesty in the Declaration, which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948.

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge”

The entire Report prepared by Ms. Reem Alsalem is deeply flawed in that it promotes misinformation regarding PA. As a result, the Conclusion and Recommendations stated in Section XI of the Report are also deeply flawed and untenable.

## Thematic Report Overview

In 2019, The World Health Organization recognized parental alienation. Despite the efforts, at that time of political ideological groups to prevent it, on 25 May 2019, the World Health Organization accepted the current version of ICD-11 which contains within it the index term parental alienation for the code QE.52 Caregiver-Child Relationship Problem.

Member states agreed at that time to adopt the eleventh revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11), to come into effect on 1 January 2022.

ICD is the foundation for the identification of health trends and statistics globally, and the international standard for reporting diseases and health conditions. It is the diagnostic classification standard for all clinical and research purposes. ICD defines the universe of diseases, disorders, injuries and other related health conditions.

The ICD also captures factors influencing health, or external causes of mortality and morbidity, providing a holistic look at every aspect of life that can affect health.

Despite the late wave of organized women's rights memos and signatures to prevent the inclusion of PA in ICD-11, some of which came from the very people CAFCASS in the UK rely upon in their professed understanding of parental alienation, the WHO did not bow to the pressure of misinformation and false news about parental alienation then. No longer misrepresented as a tool for abusive ex partners to use in divorce and separation, finally parental alienation is recognized for the mental health problem it really is.

In this evolving field of work and understanding of a child's unjustified rejection of a parent after divorce and separation, we now find ourselves at the turning point of before and after ICD-11.

A child's unjustified rejection of a parent after divorce and separation is now defined as a caregiver-child relationship problem recognized by the World Health Organization. That this global care-giver-child relationship problem is already well defined in the scientific literature which is now being developed at a rapid pace. Away from the politicized reduction of the problem to that of a weapon in a war about 'contact' with a parent after separation, the nuances of the problem, which are interwoven deeply in the fabric of society, family, interpersonal relationships, attitudes towards children and the psychology of divorce and separation are being understood, evidenced and addressed.

The inclusion of parental alienation in 2019 as the index term in ICD-11 came after a long campaign led by William Bernet, MD, a forensic child psychiatrist, professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee, editor of *Parental Alienation, DSM-5, and ICD-11* and the co-editor of *Parental Alienation – Science and Law as well as* the founder and first president of Parental Alienation Study Group. Finally, the psychological manipulation of children of divorce and separation has the recognition generations of children have desperately needed us to achieve for them.

His work will not be wasted by those of us who understand the suffering caused by the harm done to children and families affected by parental alienation.

Now in 2023, the political agenda again is driving the UN agenda. Have we not learned the lessons of the past?

This Analysis of the "Report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls" (the "Report") addresses the following topics:



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- The Special Rapporteur literally had the resources of the whole world available to her to produce a solid report that represents the best of qualitative and quantitative research practices. The Report failed to accomplish that goal, and is deeply flawed.
- We live in the age of misinformation. Through social media, trolling, and science denial techniques, it has become exceedingly easy to sway public opinion. When these tactics are employed to undermine the scientific community and to censor alternative viewpoints in order to promote a personal agenda, democracy itself is in danger of being overtaken by totalitarian ideologies and regimes. The misguided foundation of the Report and the way it was developed places ideology before the safety of children, women, and men.
- The Call for Inputs that was issued by the Special Rapporteur in 2022 demonstrates that this project was seriously biased from the start against parental alienation (PA) theory. The Special Rapporteur decided years ago that PA theory was in conflict with her personal values and opinions, and she found a way to use the Human Rights Council of the United Nations to advance her own agenda.
- The adverse impact of such pervasive bias may be to dissuade individuals and organizations from submitting alternative and contrary views. They may consider the bias renders their efforts ineffectual and they may be in fear of public and social media criticism noting the Special Rapporteur’s generally pejorative comments.
- The pervasive bias of the Report is apparent in the following ways:
  - repeatedly referring to the “pseudo-concept of parental alienation” in a pejorative manner;
  - relying completely on anti-PA submissions and ignoring scientific research submissions from proponents of PA theory;
  - failing to disclose the content of thousands of submissions that were made;
  - relying on the opinions and assumptions of PA critics instead of scientific evidence;
  - failing to acknowledge the painful life experiences that have been reported by victims of PA.

## Executive Summary

- Ad hominem attacks against Dr. Richard Gardner and other proponents of PA theory; science denial techniques, such as ignoring the vast number of peer-reviewed publications and scholarly books regarding PA theory; straw-man arguments (e.g., misrepresenting statistics in order to fabricate faulty conclusions); the hasty generalization fallacy (i.e., drawing expansive conclusions based on inadequate of insufficient evidence); and the anecdotal evidence fallacy (i.e., substituting examples from one’s personal experience in place of logical evidence). The Report also creates misleading arguments by citing submissions from PA critics instead of scientific evidence and misrepresenting the content of citations from journal articles and experts’ statements.
- The authors of the Report appear to be entertaining and promoting a conspiracy theory in which proponents of PA theory are the villains. That is, every writer and author of a submission who expresses concern about domestic violence is considered honest and truthful; but every proponent of PA theory is collaborating in an evil mission to discredit domestic violence scholars. Anyone who does not enlist in the cause of promoting the domestic violence belief system is by definition part of the conspiracy.
- The authors of the Report violated the principles of the Code of Conduct of the Human Rights Council. The basic purpose of the Report is to encourage States to ban the use of alienating behaviors in legal proceedings and in broader public policy decisions. It may be unprecedented in a democratic society for



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a legitimate national or international governmental body to demand that a scientifically validated approach to theory and practice be canceled. In this case, the demand for cancellation is driven by a strong anti-PA bias and fueled by vast misinformation.

- By seeking to suppress use of PA theory in child custody cases, the Special Rapporteur is abandoning millions of women who are the victims of PA. For the Special Rapporteur, it is more important to win the ideological battle—eliminating PA theory from child custody trials—than to help the mothers who have been tragically alienated from their children. It is especially egregious and discriminatory for the Special Rapporteur to divide women and children against each other based on whether the Special Rapporteur acknowledges their lived experience of domestic violence. It is further discriminatory for the Special Rapporteur to claim that only women and children are abused. Based on accredited, scientific, medical and governmental resources, grandparents, extended family members and even friends can be alienators and men are abused at a similar rate as women.
- The fundamental error of the Report is creating and promoting an unnecessary feud between the family advocates who are concerned about domestic violence and the family advocates who are concerned about PA, which is a form of domestic violence. But the truth is the following: domestic violence is a serious psychosocial condition that damages millions of families; and PA is a serious psychosocial condition that damages millions of families. It is pointless to tear down one field of study in order to promote the other. Scholars with different points of view should talk with each other and learn from each other, not generate pointless debates and perpetual misinformation.
- The report does not rely upon high quality medically professionally peer reviewed and accepted journals.

## **Restatement of Conclusion and Recommendations**

The entire Report prepared by Ms. Reem Alsalem again is deeply flawed in that it promotes misinformation regarding PA. As a result, the Conclusion and Recommendations stated in Section XI of the Report are also deeply flawed and untenable. We suggest that the Recommendations should be revised and stated as follows:

- (a) States legislate to **ENCOURAGE THE UNDERSTANDING AND** use of parental alienation, **AS APPROPRIATE**, in family law cases and the use of **QUALIFIED** experts in parental alienation and related concepts;
- (b) States comply with their responsibilities and positive obligations under international human rights law by establishing regular monitoring mechanisms to oversee the effectiveness of family justice systems for victims of domestic abuse, **INCLUDING VICTIMS OF PARENTAL ALIENATION**;
- (c) States ensure mandatory training of the judiciary and other justice system professionals on gender bias **AGAINST VARIOUS GENDER GROUPS**, the dynamics of domestic violence and the relationship between allegations of domestic abuse and of parental alienation and related concepts;
- (d) States issue and implement specific guidance to the judiciary on the need to examine each case on the basis of facts and to judge fairly, according to the range of evidence before them, what outcome best supports the welfare of the child;



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- (e) States institute publicly funded systems of experts to provide information to courts on the best interest of the child and such experts be regularly trained on the dynamics of domestic violence, INCLUDING PARENTAL ALIENATION, AND THEIR effect on victims, including children;
- (f) States ensure and maintain a list of approved experts for the family law system and introduce a formal complaint mechanism and an enforceable code of practice that addresses conflicts of interest and the recognition of expertise to practice in this area;
- (g) No evaluations be made in family law proceedings without consideration of relevant criminal law and/or child protection proceedings;

## Conclusions

For these reasons, the report does not represent ALL STATES analysis. The “Report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls” should be withdrawn immediately from publication and distribution. The Report places policy and lawmakers at risk of basing social and public health policies, legal remedies, and clinical remediations on unscientific, unfounded, and false information.

The Human Rights Council should consider best practices when investigating all perspectives of topics that seem controversial, rather than invest in biased interpretations of complex problems. There should be no further discussion in Geneva on this topic in June unless the recommendations and suggestions are accepted.



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Myth	Truth
Parental Alienation is Junk Science and the term is abused and pseudo-science	Clinical, legal, and scientific evidence on PA has accumulated for over 35 years. There have been over 1,000 * highly regarded scholarly papers published on the topic, and the empirical research on the topic has expanded greatly over the last few years, leading to what has been considered a “blossoming” of the scientific field. These are published in peer-reviewed, top psychological journals. <i>Harman, Bernet, &amp; Harman, 2019; Lorandos &amp; Bernet, 2020; Lorandos, 2020; Marques, Narciso, &amp; Ferreira, 2020</i>
Only Women and Children are abused	Each year, men are more likely than women to be victims of domestic violence and other forms of partner abuse, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control: Men: 4.2 million victims & Women: 3.5 million victims. <i>Centers for Disease Control, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey</i>
Courts ignore the history of DV brought up by Women and Children	The courts are tasked with investigating claims of abuse. The problem is that 73% of reports are dismissed as false allegations or not enough information to substantiate. Overall, 22% of individuals assaulted by a partner at least once in their lifetime (23% for females and 19.3% for males), Rates of female-perpetrated violence higher than male-perpetrated (28.3% vs. 21.6%). We agree that medical and legal professionals should receive training in high conflict resolution to help improve the investigative process. <i>Centers for Disease Control, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey</i>
Fathers get more custody over mothers	According to a 2022 Census Bureau Survey of the 73,289,000 parents, 15,781,000 the children lived only with their mother and 3,442,000 lived only with their father. This is a huge difference compared to what the Special Rapporteur is claiming. It would be inappropriate to ignore the Census Bureau reports or claim they are invalid. <i>ASEC &amp; USA Census Bureau</i>
Psychological Abuse is only perpetrated by Abusive Men	Across studies, 40% of women and 32% of men reported expressive abuse; 41% of women and 43% of men reported coercive abuse <i>Centers for Disease Control, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.</i>
There is no formal training and education on Parental Alienation	With over 35 years of research and study, there are now numerous trainings based on psychological parameters based on this information. What we agree with is that too many experts and the courts are not properly trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of psychological abuse and custodial interference. We agree with better training for medical and legal professionals for all issues that arise in high conflict and abusive custody disputes. <i>Harman JJ, Kruk E &amp; Hines DA (2018)</i>
Children’s voices do not matter	Children's voices matter and professionals can start to develop standards on how to properly incorporate their voice into custody decisions, taking into consideration developmental age and the legal aspects of each case. Children can be easily inculcated into a cult of anger, fear, hatred and rage at the other parent. If this was an intact family, the entire family would be in therapy to deal with any perceived abuses. <i>2023, Kloth-Zanard, JT</i>
Women face additional barriers with regard to parental alienation.	Just as many men face this barrier, but the DV research done by women’s organizations does NOT include men in any of their research or studies making them gender biased and invalid. Research shows that men are abused at almost the same rate. <i>Denise Hines (2014) &amp; Hines, D. A., &amp; Douglas, E. M. (2018).</i>
Women/Girls lack access to prevention/protection from DV, corrupt justice & judicial procedures.	Truth is that women and children are provided more resources and support as well as extensive funding that fathers and men do not have. Men are never considered by these women’s DV organizations who have been abused.
Data collection on women/girls providing guidance to prevent gender-based violence	We believe that the adversarial family court process is a breeding ground for corruption. If we are to truly address gender biases, we must include men. To not do so, makes the gender biases stacked against men.



## Annotated References

References	Type of Paper/Methods Used	General Findings/Conclusion
ASEC, <a href="http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar22.pdf">http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar22.pdf</a>	Current Population Survey 2022 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement	Of the 73,289 parents surveyed, 15,781 the children lived only with their mother and 3442 lived only with their father.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <i>National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release</i> , Atlanta, Georgia. 2018. Tables 9 and 11. <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015-data-brief508.pdf">https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015-data-brief508.pdf</a>	Collection of data by government private and public agencies	Sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence are serious public health problems affecting millions of people in the United States each year. These forms of violence are associated with chronic physical and psychological adverse health conditions, and violence experienced as a child or adolescent is a risk factor for repeated victimization as an adult.
Centers for Disease Control, <i>National Intimate Partner and Violence Survey</i> . <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nisvs/">https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nisvs/</a>	Collection of data by government private and public agencies	The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) is an ongoing survey that collects the most current and comprehensive national- and state-level data on intimate partner violence, sexual violence and stalking victimization in the United States. CDC developed NISVS to collect data on these important public health problems and enhance violence prevention efforts.
DAVIA - 2021 - Special Report - Thirty-Years of Domestic Violence Half-Truths, Falsehoods, and Lies, 2021	Based on research studies and analysis of these findings.	Copyright © 2021, Coalition to End Domestic Violence. <a href="http://www.EndtoDV.org">www.EndtoDV.org</a> A pre-publication copy of this Special Report was provided to the DOJ Office on Violence Against Women to assure the report’s factual accuracy. No reply was received from the OVW.
Harman JJ, Kruk E & Hines DA (2018), <i>Parental alienating behaviors: An unacknowledged form of family violence</i> , <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> 44.12.	Research based data from studies	Presents solid verifiable scientific evidence that Parental Alienation is real and is a form of domestic violence.
Harman, J. J., Bernet, W., & Harman, J. (2019). Parental alienation: The blossoming of a field of study. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 28, 212-217.	Review of the scientific literature and theoretical development in the field of PA.	Research in the field has moved from largely descriptive studies of PA across many countries and contexts, to greater theoretical model development and testing.
Hines, D. A., & Douglas, E. M. (2018). Influence of intimate terrorism, situational couple violence, and mutual control on male victims. <i>Psychology of Men &amp; Masculinity</i> , 19, 612-623.	A critical review of research on victims of different forms of intimate partner violence: intimate terrorism, situational couple violence, and mutual control. Two studies were reported on the impact of violence on male victims.	Intimate terrorism (aka coercively controlling violence) is characterized by abusive behaviors that are low in mutuality. Men who are victims of intimate terrorism were found to have worse outcomes than those who reciprocated the abuse.
Kloth-Zanard, Joan, 2023, Executive Functioning and Resiliency, How Children’s brains work and why sometimes things just seem out of sorts or just plain hard to do.	Based on medical research and scientific training on the human brain related to psychological and mental health	There are professionals out there who will claim children are resilient. Resilience is the ability to regain or recoup quickly from a difficult situation. New research shows this is not true for all children. In other words, not all children are resilient. In fact, children are only resilient if...they get the right resources and support, otherwise they lack executive functioning skills such as the ability to critically think
Machado, A., Hines, D., & Douglas, E. M. (2020). Male victims of female-perpetrated partner violence: A qualitative analysis of men’s experiences, the impact of violence, and perceptions of their worth. <i>Psychology of Men &amp; Masculinities</i> , 21(4), 612–621. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000285">https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000285</a>	Quantitative Analysis of men’s experiences and the statistics of IPV	A qualitative analysis of abuse and help-seeking experiences of men who are victims of PV reveals that men report being underacknowledged, mistreated, and penalized when trying to seek help or address the patterns of abuse in their intimate relationships. The findings also highlight the potential societal issues that male victims perceived as contributing to male victimization and the lack of available resources for them. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2020 APA, all rights reserved)
<b>2016, FACTS AND STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT-A-GLANCE</b> Sponsored by the peer-reviewed journal <i>Partner Abuse</i> <a href="https://www.springerpub.com/partner-abuse.html">https://www.springerpub.com/partner-abuse.html</a> and the Association of Domestic Violence Intervention Providers <a href="https://domesticviolenceintervention.net/">https://domesticviolenceintervention.net/</a> <a href="https://domesticviolenceresearch.org/domestic-violence-facts-and-statistics-at-a-glance/">https://domesticviolenceresearch.org/domestic-violence-facts-and-statistics-at-a-glance/</a>	Compilation of research and studies from around the world on IPV	Over 160 Research Studies were reviewed, analyzed and compared to show that Men are abused at an equal if not higher rate than women and children.



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The PA Consortium is an organization championing to safeguard and protect the world's families and children with a commitment to stop domestic abuse and protect mothers, fathers and children across the globe. The PA CONSORTIUM has long been an important venue across North America, Europe and Asia and shares the mission of along with many group of states, countries, senior policy makers, business leaders, representatives of media, academe, qualified trained medical and scientific experts on relational trauma caused by PA.

# Parental Alienation is Real

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<b>What is PA?</b>	Parental alienation (PA) occurs when a child aligns with one parent and rejects their other parent for reasons that are <i>not</i> legitimate. This is different from estrangement, when a child's resistance to have a relationship is for justifiable reasons. <b><i>PA is child psychological abuse.</i></b>
	Beinet, 2010; Lorandos & Beinet, 2020; Warsak, 2019
<b>What causes PA?</b>	Abusive parents often use their children as weapons to harm the other parent and manipulate them. Domestic violence researchers call this behavior a form of coercive control. Scientists who study PA call this <b><i>very same behavior</i></b> parental alienating behavior. They are two terms describing the same phenomenon.
	Harman, Kruk, & Hines, 2018; Harman & Matthews, 2020
<b>Is research on PA "scientific?"</b>	Clinical, legal, and scientific evidence on PA has accumulated for over 35 years. There have been over 1,000 scholarly papers published on the topic, and the empirical research on the topic has expanded greatly over the last few years, leading to what has been considered a "blossoming" of the scientific field.
	Harman, Beinet, & Harman, 2019; Lorandos & Beinet, 2020; Lorandos, 2020; Marques, Narciso, & Ferreira, 2020
<b>Are there recognized criteria for the diagnosis of PA?</b>	Yes. There is a great deal of conformity among authorities on PA as to there being clear and discernible diagnostic criteria. These criteria are found in a simple Five-Factor Model.
	Beinet, 2020; Lorandos & Beinet, 2020; Freeman, 2020
<b>How many children are alienated from a parent?</b>	At least 3.9 million children in the U.S. are moderately to severely alienated from a parent. Other estimates of prevalence produce similar estimates. More than three times as many children in the U.S. are alienated from a parent than there are children with autism.
	Beinet, 2010; Harman, Leder-Elder, & Biringen, 2019;
<b>How serious is PA for children?</b>	Parental alienation is a serious form of psychological abuse and results in the same types of outcomes that other abused children experience: stress and adjustment disorders (e.g., PTSD, anxiety), psychosocial problems and externalizing behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, suicidality).
	Baker & Venocchia, 2016; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Harman et al., 2018
<b>How does PA affect alienated parents?</b>	Alienated parents are unable to get closure and have unresolved grief with the loss of their child(ren). They also suffer from being the target of abusive behaviors of the alienating parent. They have high levels of depression, anxiety, and PTSD symptoms, and many become suicidal.
	Harman et al., 2019; Lee-Maturana, Matthews, & Dwan, 2020; Poustie, Matthews, & Halmer, 2018
<b>What can be done to stop PA?</b>	Legal and professional recognition of the problem (e.g., adding parental alienation to child abuse statutes). Funding for research to promote identification of effective assessment, prevention, and intervention programs. Funding for training of legal and mental health professionals.

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# Parental Alienating Behaviors are Family Violence

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## What is family violence?

Family violence refers to all types of abuse that occur in families, including physical, sexual, psychological, and financial abuse, as well as neglect.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2006

## What are parental alienating behaviors?

Parental alienating behaviors are a parent's persistent use of patterns of behaviors over time to harm the child's relationship with their other parent. Alienating parents use many different behaviors, such as badmouthing the alienated parent to the child and others, interfering with their contact, and enlisting the child as an "ally" against them.

Baker, 2020; Harman, Kruk, & Hines, 2018; Harman & Matthewson, 2020

## Parental alienating behaviors are child abuse

Making a child believe a parent abandoned and does not love them, or that the parent is dangerous or bad, is psychological abuse. Alienated children's developmental needs are also often neglected by alienating parents. In severe cases, children need protection from these psychologically abusive behaviors.

Baker, 2020; Washak, 2015

## Parental alienating behaviors are intimate partner violence

Parental alienating behaviors are direct and indirect attacks made by an alienating parent toward the alienated parent to harm and control them. The children are used as weapons in these attacks, and they become collateral damage in the process. Domestic violence researchers label these *same behaviors* as a form of coercive control.

Harman, Kruk & Hines, 2018; Harman & Matthewson, 2020

## Parental alienating behaviors are coercively controlling

The alienating parent's intent is to manipulate and control the alienated parent's actions and outcomes. The alienated parent experiences negative outcomes if they do not comply with the alienating parent's demands or threats, such as not being able to see their children. The coercively controlling behavior of the alienating parent leads to their having greater control and dominance over the alienated parent, limits their ability to make decisions and be respected, and undermines their parental authority.

Hamberger, Larsen, & Lehmer, 2017; Harman & Matthewson, 2020

## Most families affected by parental alienation are not "hybrid cases"

Compared to other forms of abuse, coercive controlling behaviors are not often reciprocated by the victim. This form of abuse creates power imbalances such that the victim has little power or influence in the family. Describing such families as "hybrids" implies that both parents are to blame—the alienated parent is then blamed for being the victim of the alienating parent's coercive controlling behaviors, when it only takes one person to create a hostile environment.

Harman, Leder-Elder, & Biringen, 2019; Hines & Douglas, 2018

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# MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT SHARED PARENTING

Myth	Truth
Shared parenting doesn't work when parents are in conflict with each other.	The quality of the parent-child relationship is a better predictor of children's long-term outcomes than coparenting conflict. Even when there is conflict between parents, shared-custody arrangements are better for children than sole-custody arrangements on all measures of behavioral, emotional, physical, and academic well-being and are related to children having better relationships with their parents and grandparents. The only exceptions to this are situations where children are weaponized to participate in the parental conflict and are psychologically and emotionally manipulated to reject one parent and idealize the other. Fabricius; Leucken, (2007); Mahrer, O'Hara, Sandler, Wolchik. (2018); Nielsen, (2018) Harmon, Matthewson, & Baker. (2022); Fabricius & Suh, (2017)
Shared parenting isn't appropriate for infants and toddlers.	Strong, healthy parent-child relationships need consistent and frequent contact including daytime and nighttime caregiving. Young children develop primary attachments to more than just one person. There is no scientific support that young children are harmed by overnights with their fathers. There is no compelling evidence that young children benefit from overnight restrictions with parents who are loving, and attentive. Restricting infants and toddlers from overnights with loving parents is inconsistent with what we know about the development of meaningful parent-child relationships in the first years of life. There is no scientific support that young children's overnighting with their father interferes in their attachment with their mother. Warshak, R. (2014 & 2018); Nielsen, L. 2014
Shared parenting increases parental conflict.	There is no scientific support that shared parenting plans increase parental conflict. Parents with joint physical custody do not generally have significantly less conflict or more cooperative relationships than parents with sole physical custody. Neilson, L. (2017) (2018)
Separated parenting should follow the pre-separation pattern of parenting.	Children whose parents have joint legal and physical custody demonstrate better adjustment, across several domains including family relationships, behavioral adjustment, emotional well-being, and academic achievement, than children who remain in the sole custody of one parent. Approximately 85% of children say they wanted more time with their fathers after divorce. (Emery, R. 2004; Fabricius, W. 2003). Parenting roles often change after separation and divorce because the parents must delegate their time between work and parenting differently in a single parent home. There are many changes to which children must adapt after separation. While gradual transitions can be better for children in some cases, the experience of one parent taking on more parenting responsibilities and another pursuing career activities can provide for more enriching experiences with each parent. Emery, R. (2004); Fabricius, W. (2003); Bausorman, R. (2002)
Shared parenting is a "one size fits all" arrangement.	Shared parenting is an extremely flexible approach to separated parenting. There are many different equal shared parenting schedules to fit the needs of different families. Research supports schedules tailored to the ages of children with shorter exchange periods for younger children. Still, an equal shared parenting schedule isn't appropriate in all cases, which is why presumptions in favor of it must be rebuttable. There is no scientific support for the presumptions that courts use now that there should be a primary parent and unequal parenting schedule. The science actually shows that the closer we get to equal parenting the better absent extraordinary circumstances but it is open to argument.
Shared parenting leaves children vulnerable to abuse	There is no scientific evidence to support this statement. Shared parenting laws are rebuttable when this type of custody plan is not in the child's best interest, when there is a demonstrated history of family violence. It still remains a judge's discretion whether to rebut a presumption of shared parenting or not



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## Last time the alienated child had face-to-face contact with their parent

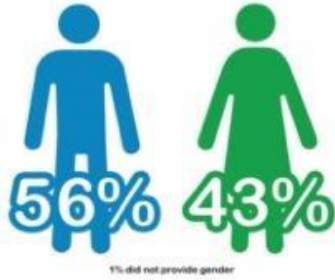
Almost **Half** of our survey respondents have not seen their child for **more than 6 months**



## Have had court orders breached



## Gender response



## Wider Family - Who is affected



16% previously experienced PA

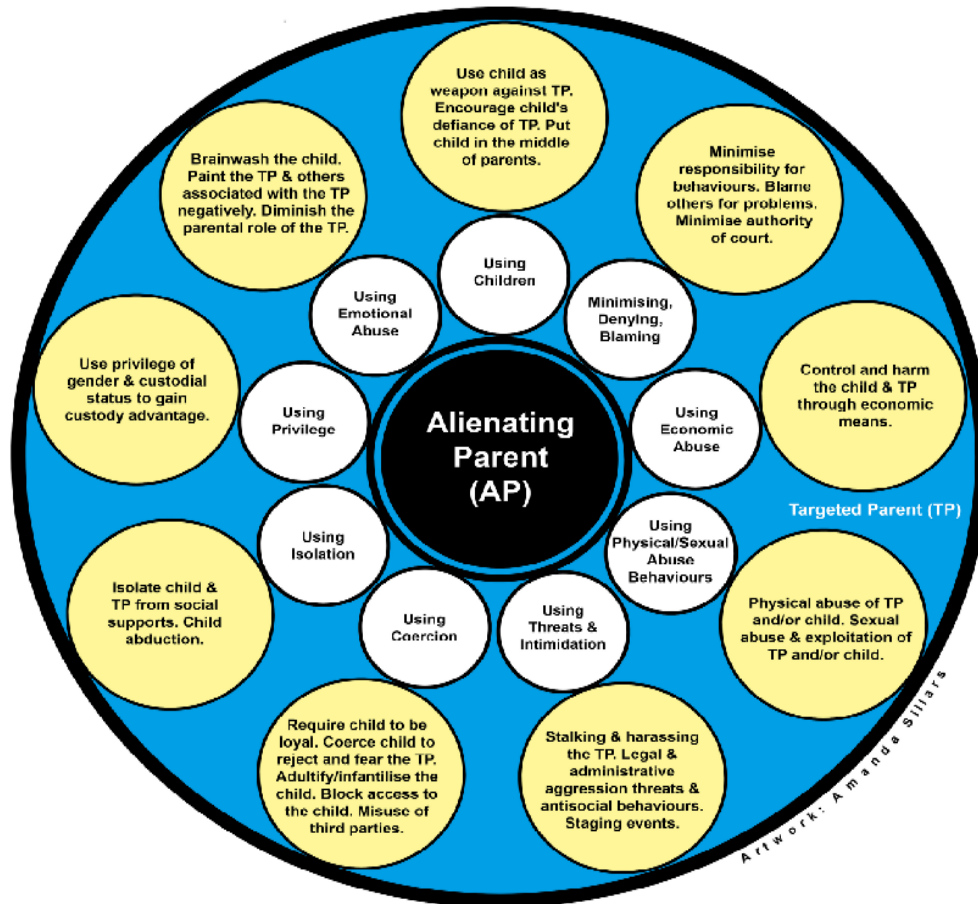


## Impact on alienated parents



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# PARENTAL ALIENATING BEHAVIORS POWER & WHEEL CONTROL



Adapted from:  
 Harman, J. J., & Matthewson, M. (2020). Parental alienating behaviors. In D. Lorandos and W. Bernet (Eds.), *Parental Alienation - Science and Law*, pp. 82-141. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher.



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The PA Consortium is an organization championing to safeguard and protect the world's families and children with a commitment to stop domestic abuse and protect mothers, fathers and children across the globe. The PA CONSORTIUM has long been an important venue across North America, Europe and Asia and shares the mission of along with many group of states, countries, senior policy makers, business leaders, representatives of media, academe, qualified trained medical and scientific experts on relational trauma caused by PA.

## TABLE

### DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR PARENTAL ALIENATION DISORDER

- A. The child—usually one whose parents are engaged in a high-conflict divorce—allies himself or herself strongly with one parent and rejects a relationship with the other, alienated parent without legitimate justification. The child resists or refuses contact or parenting time with the alienated parent.
- B. The child manifests the following behaviors:
  - 1. a persistent rejection or denigration of a parent that reaches the level of a campaign.
  - 2. weak, frivolous, and absurd rationalizations for the child's persistent criticism of the rejected parent.
- C. The child manifests two or more of the following six attitudes and behaviors:
  - 1. lack of ambivalence.
  - 2. independent-thinker phenomenon.
  - 3. reflexive support of one parent against the other.
  - 4. absence of guilt over exploitation of the rejected parent.
  - 5. presence of borrowed scenarios.
  - 6. spread of the animosity to the extended family of the rejected parent.
- D. The duration of the disturbance is at least 2 months.
- E. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, academic (occupational), or other important areas of functioning.
- F. The child's refusal to have contact with the rejected parent is without legitimate justification. That is, parental alienation disorder is not diagnosed if the rejected parent maltreated the child.

*Source. Bernet, W., von Boch-Galhau, W., Baker, A.J.L., & Morrison, S.L. (2010). Parental alienation, DSM-V, and ICD-11. American Journal of Family Therapy, 38(2), 186. Reprinted with permission by Taylor & Francis Group, <http://www.informaworld.com>.*



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## Critical Thinking and Commonsense of Shared Parenting

Commonsense Rule	Fact
<b>Commonsense 101 The Intact Family Rule.</b>	If the behavior is not acceptable in an intact family (non-divorced), then why is it permitted in a divorced family.
<b>Commonsense 102 Probate Presumption = Family Court Presumption</b>	If in probate court there is a presumption of joint/shared custody related to guardianship, then it should also follow into family court for separating or divorcing parents. Otherwise, this is discrimination against separating/divorcing parents.
<b>Commonsense 103 Secondary Education</b>	If an intact family cannot be forced to pay for secondary college or child support for children, then it cannot be forced upon a separated/divorced family especially where shared parenting does not exist or the relationship between a parent and their children has been interfered with.
<b>Commonsense 104 Child Support</b>	\$1 dollar does not become \$2 in income just because parents separate or get divorced. We don't demand that intact families pay for their children, and in fact, give them assistance when they cannot afford it.
<b>Commonsense 105 Minors Decision Making</b>	If in an intact family, children are not just allowed to drop out of school, or violate the law or harm another or steal or disregard/disrespect a parent, then how are the courts giving children the ability to decide if and when they will see their parent. If children were allowed to make these kinds of momentous decisions with no consequences, they would be choosing to not go to school, to stay up all night and to be rude and arrogant to whomever they please.
<b>Commonsense 106 Healthy Relationship</b>	If prior to a separation and divorce, the children had a healthy relationship with their parent, then this should not have changed unless one parent is deliberately impeding with that relationship.
<b>Commonsense 107 Age of Majority</b>	If we do not allow children to vote until 18, then clearly, they do not have enough emotional or mental maturity to remove one parent and decide not to visit them.
<b>Commonsense 108 Disagreements don't mean disowning</b>	If every child who had a disagreement with a parent could disown them, no children would have parents.
<b>Commonsense 109 Children are not resilient</b>	Children are not truly resilient, as their psychological and emotional development is not fully formed until age 25 and 35. How could they possibly make a decision to disregard court orders or to disown a parent.
<b>Commonsense 110 Blocking a Relationship</b>	If blocking a parent in a marriage from access to the children's medical or educational info is not allowed, then why should it be allowed in a divorce.
<b>Commonsense 111 Child's Refusals</b>	If a child is not allowed to refuse to go to school, refuse to go to a medical appointment, refuse to do their chores, refuse to be nice, refuse to spend time with one parent, then why are they allowed to violate court orders for visitation?
<b>Commonsense 112 Family Conflicts</b>	If a child is saying they hate the other parent and this was an intact family, the child and parent would be in specialized therapy to work through the issue.
<b>Commonsense 113 Family Conflicts</b>	If a Child Support receiving parent can retro-back on child support where financial information was false, then the same should qualify for a child support paying parent who has been overpaying.



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## Annotated References

Reference	General Findings/Conclusions
Baude, A. <i>et al.</i> (2016). Child adjustment in joint physical custody versus sole custody: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Divorce &amp; Remarriage</i> . 57(5), 338-360.	This meta-analytic study found that "better adjustment for young people in joint custody was only significant for those who spent an equal or almost equal amount of time with their two parents."
Bauserman, R. (2002) Child adjustment in joint-custody versus sole-custody arrangements: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i> , 16(1), 91–102.	A meta-analysis of 33 studies compared adjustment between children being raised in sole custody and children being raised in joint custody after divorce. Children were found to be better adjusted in areas of self-esteem, family relationships, divorce related adjustment, academic achievement, and emotional and behavioral adjustment, when raised by parents who shared legal and physical custody.
Bauserman, R. (2012). A meta-analysis of parental satisfaction, adjustment, and conflict in joint custody and sole custody following divorce. <i>Journal of Divorce &amp; Remarriage</i> . 53(6), 464-488.	"[B]oth JC [joint physical custody] mothers and JC fathers report less conflict with their ex-spouse, and more emotional support and positive feelings in the relationship. Frequency of relitigation is also less in cases of JC (especially for specific types of actions, such as child support modification).
Emery, R. (2004). <i>The truth about children and divorce</i> . New York, NY: Viking.	While divorce is an adjustment for children, it does not necessarily cause lasting damage. It is a major stressor, but "pain is not pathology. Grief is not a mental disorder."
Fabricius, W. (2003) Listening to children of divorce: New findings that diverge from Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee, <i>Family Relations</i> 52(4), 385-396	College students preferred equal time with parents after divorce. They reported better adult relationships with parents, feeling more supported by their parents, and receiving more college support from parents when they had equal parenting time arrangements after divorce.
Fabricius, W. & Hall, J. A. (2005). Young adults' perspectives on divorce living arrangements. <i>Family Court Review</i> , 38(4), 446–461.	820 college students provided their perspectives on the parents' divorce. The majority wished they had been able to spend more time with their fathers while growing up. Their perspective was that their fathers wanted more time, but their mothers did not want them to have more time.
Fabricius, W. <i>et al.</i> (2018). What happens when there is presumptive 50/50 parenting time? An Evaluation of Arizona's New Child Custody Statute. <i>Journal of Divorce &amp; Remarriage</i> . 59(5), 414-428.	Four years after Arizona enacted its shared parenting legislation, research showed that "the law functions as a rebuttable presumption of equal parenting time; that it is evaluated positively overall in terms of children's best interests" by "conciliation court staff, judges, mental health professionals, and attorneys" and that it "has a neutral impact on legal and interpersonal conflict."
Fabricius, W. (2020). Equal parenting time: The case for a legal presumption. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law</i> (pp. 453-476). Oxford University Press.	"[T]he overall pattern of evidence indicates that legal presumptions of equal parenting time would help protect children's emotional security with each of their divorced parents, and consequently would have a positive effect on public health in the form of reduced long-term stress-related mental and physical health problems among children of divorce."
Bargaining under threats: The effect of joint custody laws on intimate partner violence. Kloth-Zanard, Joan. 2022. Commonsense	Researchers in Spain found that presumptions of equal shared parenting led to almost a 50% decrease in IPV among divorcing parents and to a significant reduction in female homicides by intimate partners.
101, article on family values that should proceed in divorce.	Review of 35 years of work with DV and Families who are dealing with high conflict custody situations and the family courts. This article shows a straight line between what goes on in an intact family, and how it should not change just because the parents are not getting along.
Kruk, E. (2013). <i>The Equal Parenting Presumption</i> . Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queens University Press.	Kruk addresses many of the myths concerning equal shared parenting, including its benefits to children in a wide variety of circumstances and its effect on parental conflict/cooperation.
Nielsen, L. (2017). Re- examining the research on parental conflict, coparenting, and custody arrangements. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i> , 23, 211–231.	This article addresses four questions: (1) How much consideration should be given to co-parenting conflict when determining parenting time, (2) Do children have better outcomes when their divorced parents have low levels of conflict, (3) are children's outcomes worsened by parents taking their divorces to court, and (4) are children's outcomes better in sole-physical custody situations if the parents are conflicted and uncooperative?
Nielsen, L. (2018). Joint versus sole physical custody: Children's outcomes independent of parent-child relationships, income, and conflict in 60 Studies, <i>Journal of Divorce &amp; Remarriage</i> . 59(4) 247-281.	This article reviews the outcomes for children in joint physical custody (JPC) compared to those in sole physical custody (SPC) controlling for income, coparenting conflict, and quality of the parent-child relationship. Regardless of income, conflict, or the quality of children's relationships with their parents, JPC generally children had better outcomes on most or on all measures.



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